

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph [0024] as follows:

[0024] The spacing between supports suspended in the same pair of chains is fixed and remains constant during movement as long as they are suspended in the same pair of chains. Each support can pass from any guide member wherein it is suspended, to an adjacent guide member. For instance a support suspended in the upper guide member (6) can pass via the middle guide member (5) to the lower guide member (4) and back. This movement is enabled by adequately driving and controlling the respective guide members. In one embodiment of the present invention, each of the guide members 4, 5 and 6 is provided with an associated clutch 4', 5' and 6' (not shown) which can be selectably engaged or disengaged. Control ~~means (not shown)~~ means C are provided to selectably and independently engage or disengage the clutches. When the clutch is engaged, drive can be submitted to the associated guide member. The configuration may be such that a single drive motor is used to drive the respective guide members. For instance, the drive motor may be positioned such that, when the clutch is engaged, the drive generated by said motor, e.g. a DC motor, is transmitted via one or more gears to one of the chains of the lower guide member (4). As the chains of each pair of chains are interconnected, they always move synchronously. Moreover, when the clutch associated with the middle guide member is also engaged, the drive transmitted to the lower guide member is also transmitted to the middle guide member such that both the middle and lower guide member move in conjunction. Finally, when also the clutch associated with the upper guide member (6) is engaged, all three guide members can be driven in conjunction. Preferably, the clutches used are integer revolution tooth clutches. An integer revolution tooth clutch is a tooth clutch having a

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revolution distance being an integer multiple of the pitch of the points of suspension of the associated guide member. The use of such clutches enables one to initiate movement of the associated guide member only on discrete positions corresponding to positions of the points of suspension on the guide member to thereby ensure position synchronisation between points of suspension of the respective guide members. This configuration is advantageous with respect to a configuration wherein multiple independently controlled drive motors are provided to drive the respective guide members, not only for reasons of costs, but mainly because of the inherent synchronisation of the movement of the respective guide members. Among others, the synchronised movement of the respective guide members facilitates the transfer of a support from the guide member where the support is suspended to an adjacent guide member.